

Blue Ribbon Panel on Water Sustainability
Friday, May 7, 2010
Meeting Summary

Introductions

- Meeting chair Herb Guenther called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. Co-chairs Benjamin Grumbles and Kris Mayes were present. Chair Guenther asked Panel members around the table to introduce themselves.

Working Purpose and Goals for BRP

- Chair Guenther noted that each Panel Member's packet contained a revised Purpose and Goals statement, which tried to capture suggestions made at the March 5 Blue Ribbon Panel meeting. Chair Guenther noted that the definition of "beneficial purposes" did not include domestic use, but will add it. Co-chair Grumbles said he believes that this revision is a good working document for the present, but is always subject to modification as the Panel's work evolves.

Working Group Reports

- All five Working Group chairs provided update reports. PowerPoints presented by Chairs Chavez, Doba, and Carpenter are posted on the ADWR website. Please access the ADWR website for detailed reports on the progress of these working groups. The meeting notes that follow for these three working groups, therefore, focus on discussions that ensued after the PowerPoint presentations, rather than the content of the presentations themselves.

1. *Public Perception/Acceptance, Kathy Chavez, Chair*

- BRP Co-chair Mayes inquired as to how far along the working group was in addressing public education. Chair Chavez responded that they will be putting that together. BRP Co-chair Mayes stated that the ACC is requiring regulated utilities to undertake public education activities on water conservation issues that target their specific customer base.
- Panelist Carol Erwin noted that, based on experience with a number of large reclaimed water projects in southern California, public education efforts must be tailored to address local concerns and demographics. One size does not fit all. What may connect with citizens in one area may be irrelevant elsewhere.

- BRP co-chair Grumbles noted that a recent paper on gray water may be useful as the working group continues its deliberations. This report is entitled, “White Paper on Graywater,” published by American Water Works Association, Water Environment Federation, and WaterReuse Association, and prepared by Bahman Sheikh, PhD, PE. Link: <http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/WaterManagement/documents/GraywaterWhitePaperFinal.pdf>

2. Regulations and Permitting, Rob Doba, Chair

- BRP Co-chair Grumbles asked for further explanation of one of the focus areas noted in the PowerPoint presentation: “Salinity requirements should be left to resolve between the water provider and the end user.” Working Group Chair Doba stated that the rationale for this sentiment is that different end uses have different water quality limitations. For example, salinity might cause turf burning at a golf course, but not cause a problem for other end users of the reclaimed water. Thus, the responsibility for addressing the salinity problem should be between the reclaimed water provider and the end user, not controlled by general requirements for salinity removal.
- BRP Co-chair Mayes and Chair Doba discussed the under utilization of tax incentives for gray water systems and the possibility of a Best Management Practice for water providers in ADWR’s Non-Per Capita Conservation Program.
- Panelist Bob Lotts suggested that maybe there should be a base level standard for gray water quality, with more stringent standards developed to accommodate any intended higher-level uses of the gray water.
- Panelist Ron Rayner asked whether reverse osmosis reject water is allowed to be discharged into a sewage collection system. Chair Doba explained that while an industrial discharge would likely have to comply with NPDES local limits set for the sewage collection system, there is currently no restriction that he is aware of governing household systems.

3. Infrastructure/Retrofit, Guy Carpenter, Chair

- A commenter from the audience suggested that international standards be consulted, particularly with respect to international examples of performance standards, rather than overlying on prescriptive standards. Use of performance standards would foster innovative approaches to reclaimed water infrastructure.

- BRP Chair Grumbles said it would be very advantageous to assess progress in the use of reclaimed and recycled water if the miles of “purple pipe” installed could be tracked.

4. Conservation/Recycling/Efficiency/Energy Nexus, Steve Olson, Chair

- Chair Olson reported that the workgroup decided not to break into subgroups, and would to dedicate one subtopic per meeting. To date, the group has heard presentations on stormwater utilization, the Water/Energy Nexus, Agricultural Conservation, and Municipal Conservation. Each meeting has consisted of discussion amongst a panel of experts. Four questions were addressed for each subtopic:
 1. What is being done in Arizona today?
 2. What ideas could be used from other sources such as other states, academia, etc.
 3. What needs to be accomplished? What needs to be changed?
 4. How do existing regulations, policies and strategies work today to either facilitate or inhibit achieving desired objectives?

5. Economic/Funding, Supervisor David Snider, Chair

- Chair Snider indicated that this working group was developing a matrix that matches funding opportunities with various types of projects. He also recommended viewing the presentation “Funding Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects,” given to the Working Group by Melanie Ford of WIFA. This presentation is posted on the ADWR website under the April 12, 2010 meeting of the Economic/Funding Working Group.
- Panelist Rayner noted that HB 2653 allows small municipalities to jointly issue bonds. This may be an opportunity for funding water sustainability projects.
- BRP Co-chair Mayes asked where the working group was in the process and what the schedule was for drilling down into the options and making recommendations.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- Working group chairs and BRP panelists highlighted several issues that cut across two or more working groups. These included:
 1. Involving pharmaceutical companies in the issue of pharmaceuticals in wastewater and their release into the environment.
 2. Gray water use involves permitting, technical standards, conservation, and perception issues.

3. Stormwater harvesting involves both permitting and conservation issues.
4. Coordination of monetary and non-monetary incentives, which are being considered in the Economics/Funding Work Group into whatever regulatory and permitting framework is developed.
5. Energy footprint of water delivery.
6. Impact of conservation measures on sustainability in the larger picture.
7. Need better data on how reclaimed water is used.
8. Ability to maintain infrastructure.
9. Relationship between conservation and reliability; for example, decreasing indoor use reduces sewage flows.
10. Should the energy/water nexus issue be broken out and established as a separate working group to ensure that it gets due consideration? BRP Co-chair Mayes said she would send information on a recent ACC “externalities” workshop to Working Group Chair Olson.
11. Approaches to dealing with disincentives to conservation, for example, increased conservation decreases a utility’s volumetric water sales and hence revenue. Need to investigate decoupling the rate structure from pure volumetric sales. BRP Co-chair Grumbles said there was a need to work with drinking water utilities on decoupling approaches. He also pointed out that utilities benefit in different ways, though, from water conservation programs, for example, reduced chemical use. Panelist O’Connor reiterated that conservation does create problems for water utilities and supported examining approaches that do not wholly link generation of revenue with volumetric sales.
12. Need to recognize that 80% of population in rural Arizona is served by small utilities. Recommendations, especially with respect to reclaimed water, must be cognizant of this, and the fact that there may be limited access to wastewater treatment plants in these areas.

Draft Outline for Interim Report

- Sandy Fabritz-Whitney presented the proposed draft outline for the Interim Report, for which a completion date of June 30, 2010, has been set. Each working group would submit their portion of the report, following the format in the outline, by June 15. There was no objection to using this outline for the Interim Report.

Presentations

- The following presentations were made, which are posted on the ADWR website:

1. “Planning a Water Sustainability Program,” by Melaney Seacat, Pima County, and Nicole Ewing-Gavin, City of Tucson. Ms. Seacat gave the presentation.
 2. “Building Water Sustainability Infrastructure in a New Community: Practical Challenges,” by Trevor Hill, Global Water.
- Due to a time constraint and a scheduling conflict, the presentations by Ruth Greenhouse of ADWR and by Ft. Huachuca were deferred to a later meeting.

Call to the Public

- Co-chair Guenther made a call to the public. There were no questions or comments.

Next Meeting

- BRP Co-chairs Guenther, Mayes, and Grumbles set the next Blue Ribbon Panel meeting on Friday, July 9, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, to be held at ADWR.
- BRP Chair Guenther adjourned the meeting at 1:00 pm.